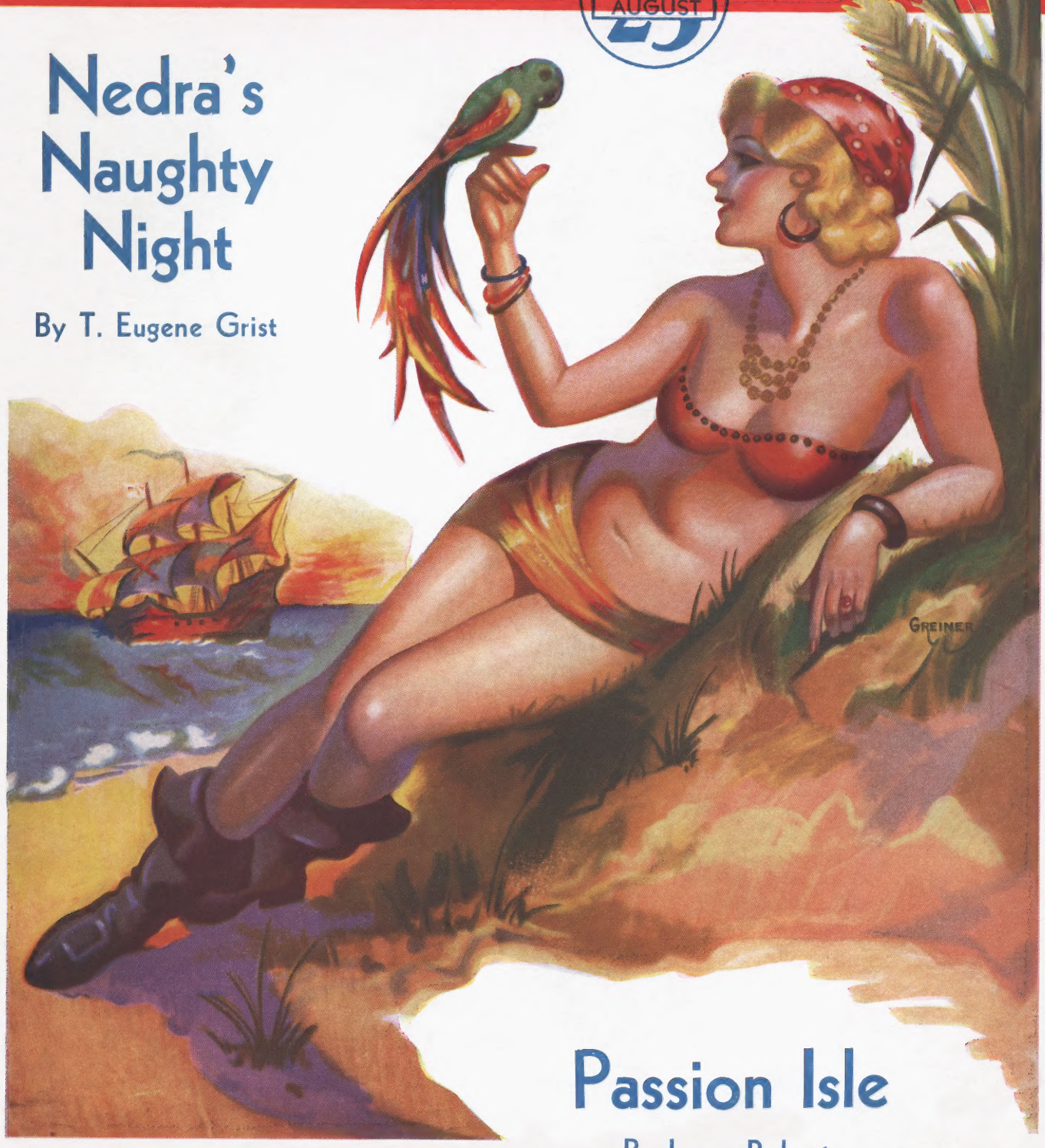
Gayety

25¢ AUGUST

Nedra's Naughty Night

By T. Eugene Grist



Passion Isle

By Larry Roberts

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GAYETY

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NIGHT LIFE IN PARIS!

¶ Did I hear you gasp? Most of us do gasp, you know, whenever we think of Gay Paree—the city of untrammeled, unrestricted Fun. Paris! the city of lilting laughter, of adventure, of joyous Romance—where real human beings live as they want to live and allow others to do the same—taking their fun as Fate brings it to them, or as they go out and, seeking, find it for themselves.

NIGHT LIFE IN PARIS!

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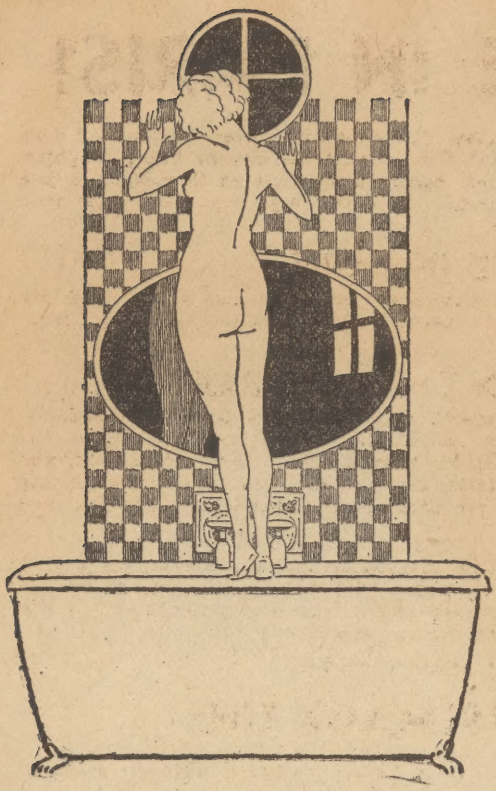
ZIPPY MAGAZINE

On all news stands once a month. 25c a copy, and worth it!

Bathroom Bubbles



Many a girl gets her fine feathers from a lark.

◆ ◆ ◆

The way times are, it's no wonder a watch covers its face with its hands.

◆ ◆ ◆

A movie actor has said that wives are as good as gold. Yes, and just as hard to keep these days.

◆ ◆ ◆

There was an English lord who took an actress out to tell her all about his estate and forgot his manors.

◆ ◆ ◆

He failed as an architect, so he went on the stage—and he's drawing better houses now.

◆ ◆ ◆

At election time we hear a lot about a "straight" ticket. That's a queer word to use in connection with politics.

Passion Isle

By LARRY ROBERTS

KERRY opened his eyes slowly to find a torrid sun beating down on a crystal white beach. Inland a jade jungle lifted its greenery in mute entreaty. Kerry looked seaward. Yes—he remembered—his boat—her mast was protruding now from the foamy waters, an accusing finger pointing at his folly. Well, he was alive—that was something if—Kerry sprang to his feet. Across the heat seared sand a huge dog was swooping down on him at tremendous speed. Then as if a magic wand had been raised, a figure of a girl appeared. The snarling dog was scarce a rod away when a musical whistle sounded and the massive brute stopped in his tracks.

Kerry breathed a sigh of extreme relief. The dog retreated slowly while the girl stood statue-like. As he gazed with admiration at the slim figure, four more lithe bodies appeared against the green tropic growth only to disappear with uncanny swiftness.

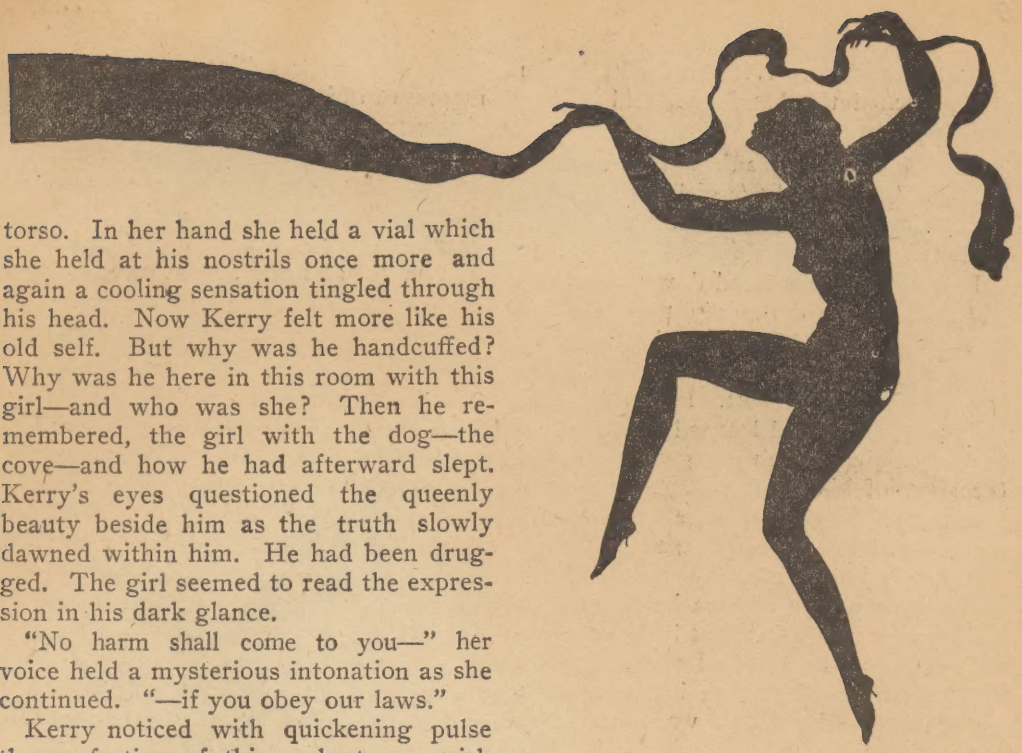
Kerry laughed aloud. He was not alone at least—not with five almost nude girls and a ferocious dog. A surge of curiosity swept over him. But after a farewell look toward his boat and another at the green wall where the wood nymphs had vanished, he decided to follow the water-line in the hope of coming to a village.

Kerry felt curious eyes constantly upon him as he trod wearily along the storm beaten shore. Several times he caught glimpses of a dog at the jungle edge. Hunger had taken possession of him when he came to a large cove where a yawl and small sail-boat were moored to a tiny pier.

Cocoanuts and bananas were plentiful here and he ate his fill. Kerry stretched his full length beneath the palms. A gentle trade wind rustled the leafy tops —the swish of the surf sang musically beyond the cove and he finally slept.

He awoke with a sense of unreality. With a supreme effort he failed to keep his eyes open. They persisted in closing. He tried to raise his hands but something hard pressed his wrists. Then he felt a soft hand upon his face—and the scent of something sweet and cool at his nostrils, clarified his muddled brain.

His eyes met those of a girl bending over him—a girl with bronzed arms and



torso. In her hand she held a vial which she held at his nostrils once more and again a cooling sensation tingled through his head. Now Kerry felt more like his old self. But why was he handcuffed? Why was he here in this room with this girl—and who was she? Then he remembered, the girl with the dog—the cove—and how he had afterward slept. Kerry's eyes questioned the queenly beauty beside him as the truth slowly dawned within him. He had been drugged. The girl seemed to read the expression in his dark glance.

"No harm shall come to you—" her voice held a mysterious intonation as she continued. "—if you obey our laws."

Kerry noticed with quickening pulse the perfection of this voluptuous girl. The piece of white material which hung about her waist reached scarcely half way to her knees and a ribbon holding her blue-black hair was her only other wearing apparel. She leaned over and pushed a stray hair from his forehead. He longed for the freedom of the arms so securely held together.

"Why am I a prisoner, fair one and what are the laws of this enchanted land? Why did you drug me and bring me into your august presence?" he asked in bantering tone.

"To drug you was the easiest way to get you here. Your bondage will cease as soon as you promise to obey the laws we have made." A sudden glint lit her eyes. "If you do not—a word from any of us will send the dogs at your throat."

"And what may your laws be lady—if I might be so bold as to ask?" Kerry noticed that his customary bantering tone was not having the desired effect.

"To live a manless existence for—but that need not concern you. You will observe this fundamental principle of our little colony. If you fail——" the girl paused dramatically. "—the dogs—" she did not finish but the sharp edge of her voice and the flash of her dark eyes gave Kerry an uneasy feeling in the region of his spine.

"But I didn't come here of my own accord. I lost my boat in the storm last night. Besides I came darn near drowning," he began indignantly.

"Yes we know that—we sympathize with you."

"Thanks—now what else must I promise to be free from this cruel captivity?" Kerry smiled but received no answering smile.

"You will be our guest—leave on the first boat that puts in with provisions—and forget all you have seen and heard."

"Well, that's easy—I agree." He held up his imprisoned hands in token of his

honest intentions. Without further adieu she unlocked the handcuffs and Kerry was free.

"To whom do I owe this—this rescue?"

Marie," answered the girl quietly, adding, "'Come, you shall meet my companions."

Later Kerry wandered down, where he had lost his boat the night before and had come near ddrowning in the surf. He went back over the events that led to his present predicament. His break with Dorine after he had learned that she had been stringing a rich old geezer along—the start of his fool voyage—weeks of fighting to forget—strange places—the storm—and five nude bronzed goddesses ruling this jungle isle.

He made a wry face as he thought of his promise to Marie. But he became apprehensive as he recalled the dogs she mentioned would require but a word to be at his—— he didn't want to even think about it.

What glorious creatures they were—their glowing forms—the flexing curves as they moved with graceful step. He was to sleep and eat under the same roof with these tantalizing females.

At dinner Kerry found time to better study the rare beauty of his hostesses. At his right Lucille with golden hair and her finely chiseled features smiled at intervals. At his left sat dark-haired Betty with long, silky eyelashes which seemed to Kerry to hide some secret. Marie sat next and seemed not to notice him as he searched the very souls of her fair companions. Next Marie, Nan's mysterious eyes sent queer thrills chasing up and down his backbone. Then there was Flo, with her hair so fine that little stray locks constantly crept down over her flushed cheeks.

Days passed and Kerry spent his time in exploring the island and gathering wild fruit for the table. He built a shelter on the beach—near where he had been washed ashore. It would serve him well for a retreat from the agony of intimate contact with these nymphs that turned his blood to molten lava. There were times when only a supreme effort on his part and the fear of the half-savage dogs kept him from taking one of his tormenters in his arms and kissing her with obsessing passion.

One night after a dinner that had strained at his remaining reserve of endurance he excused himself from the usual singing and dancing. Tonight he was weak, and well, he wanted to keep his promise to Marie and the girls. He stole down to his retreat by a silvered sea.

For a long time he lay on his back in the bamboo enclosure watching a crystal moon that hung just out of his reach? Quite like the lovely flesh he lived with and dared not even touch. Finally the monotone of the surf lulled him to sleep.

He awoke to hear his name called softly. Then he realized that someone was beside him. A voice spoke again so low that Kerry scarcely heard.

"Kerry, Kerry! Why don't you come up to the house. I—I couldn't sleep—I was afraid—afraid that something had happened to you." The voice faltered and a soft hand touched his face.

"Marie! Is it really you? Or am I dreaming. Why did you come—to tempt me—so near that I could not resist—even if you were to call your dog pack?"

"But—but I won't call! I—Oh Kerry!" Her warm body trembled at his touch. His arms pressed her close, and her soft waiting lips returned kiss for kiss. Then she relaxed. The jungle was suddenly quiet and the moon drifted to the westward sky.

Next morning, Lucille, more radiant than ever, followed Kerry from the dining room to the rambling screened porch. Her lithe tanned body fairly glistening. Her full bosom rose and fell rapidly. Re-

pressed excitement shone in her eyes. Kerry had not long to wait.

"Why do you avoid me—Kerry? she asked with a smile.

"I didn't know that I did. You know the law—I promised Marie to abide by her wishes, and I've done my best." Kerry wondered suddenly if he really had done his best. He wondered too why Lucille was suddenly so solicitous. Were they weakening? Kerry thrilled at the thought. They were now at the far end of the porch. Lucille glanced back as though someone might be within hearing.

"I want to tell you something you ought to know—meet me at your beach house in an hour."

Kerry nodded in agreement and stepped outside. He felt unseen eyes again upon him as on the first day at the beach.

An hour later Lucille emerged from the jungle growth and came toward his retreat. Kerry watched her graceful form as she moved across the glaring white sand with a thrill of determination. She did not resist, when he held her enticingly for a long moment.

"Now, tell me this secret that I should know," Kerry demanded.

They seated themselves on the thatched floor and Lucille began.

"It was Marie who discovered you lying on the beach the morning after the storm. Something you said then, while you were sleeping, gave Marie an idea. So we waited until you came out of your stupor. Marie sent the dog chasing down upon you to give you a scare. Then when you came around to the other side of the island and fell asleep Marie doped you and we carried you up to the house. You know the rest. The line she gave you is all bunk. We four girls got together last night and made up our minds to tell you the whole thing."

"But why are you girls alone on this island?" asked Kerry in perplexity.

"Well, Marie's husband invited some business associates on a fishing trip with this island as headquarters. Marie invited us girls to spend our vacation here with her. We got fed up with the old duffers and decided to stay on here while they went further south to fish. They left the day before the storm." Lucille got to her feet.

"So that's the lay, is it? It sure is great of you giving me the low down," Kerry chuckled.

But what could he have said in his sleep to cause Marie to stage a scene like that wasn't as important as this girl. Lucille was before Kerry's enraptured eyes, displaying her entrancing curves. He watched her until she had disappeared behind the green wall of the jungle. Had man ever been thrown by fate into such paradise? He'd wait and see what the gods had still to place before him.

In his room that night Kerry found a note pinned to his pillow. In a feminine hand it read:

Dearest Kerry: Meet me in the study at twelve tonight.

LUCILLE.

What an intriguing offer. A thrill of anticipation trickled with delicious ecstasy through his veins. He had won this maiden, whose grace was that of a Greek goddess. She was offering him love—meeting him more than halfway.

The hands of the clock on the dresser pointed to twelve as Kerry left his room and tiptoed down the long hallway past the girls' sleeping quarters, and across the living room to the study. The door was open. He entered the room and shot the bolt noiselessly behind him. The study was really a spare bedroom which held a writing table and spacious bookcases, that were empty. Kerry felt his

way along the wall until he came to the bed. In a whisper he called.

"Lucille!" his hands came in contact with soft warm flesh. The girl did not answer. Kerry smiled. He found her lips—lips moist and responsive. Then Kerry felt eager arms about his neck, and quivering lips sent thrills through every fibre. The girl relaxed in his arms.

Next morning Kerry's mind turned to Nan, Flo, and Betty. To him they were ravishing and soul satisfying. He thought of Marie, coming to him as the moon had sprayed the beach with silver. But he must be fair and deal his love in equal measures.

Kerry went to the cove hoping that Flo or Betty would come to look to the welfare of the boats as they usually did. He was not disappointed, for Flo came tripping towards him. She failed to notice Kerry as he sat on the shady side of the yawl until she was upon him.

"Oh, hello! Didn't expect you'd be here," exclaimed Flo in surprise.

Kerry thought he detected a trace of pleasure in her voice.

"I wanted to see you; that's why I came down here," he announced, his eyes devouring her alluring figure.

"Well, I guess you aren't missing anything by the way you are using your eyes," Flo replied good-naturedly.

"I want to talk with you, to get better acquainted," explained Kerry, rather upset.

"I'd just love to. What shall we talk about—Dorine Baxter? Or shall we guess what Marie will do next?" laughed Flo.

"How did you know her name," asked Kerry in a strained voice.

"Why, Marie heard you jabbering the morning you were found on the beach."

"Oh, did she? Well, let's forget about her. But Marie, do you think she might put me in irons again?" Kerry asked curiously.

"Well—I don't know—who can say?" replied the girl.

"I'm not worrying about Marie—it's you, Flo."

Flo looked startled. "Oh, I forgot! I must help Marie—see you later."

While preparing to retire that night, there came a gentle knock and he spied a slip of paper beneath the door. Kerry hastily picked it up and read:

Dear Kerry: Meet me in the study tonight at twelve.

FLO.

Kerry smiled. So she wanted his love and he hadn't given her even a sample of his technique. Kerry stretched out full length upon the bed. Tenderness swept over his face.

As Kerry made his way stealthily to the study at midnight, he marveled again at the strange caprice of Fate in dropping him down in this feminine haven. Inside the study he carefully bolted the door. The next moment a soft pair of arms circled his neck and two avid lips pressed Kerry's fiercely in a caress that set his blood racing. Outside, the jungle slept.

Next day, Betty and Kerry sailed out towards the mouth of the cove. Before them a grass-green sea shimmered in the morning sun. While Kerry held the tiller he chatted with Betty, lying on the lee side of the cockpit.

"Are you getting bored staying on here, Kerry?" asked the pert little maid.

"Oh no—I've enjoyed it! Close to nature and all that sort of thing." He pushed the tiller over and Betty jumped to the opposite seat, where she again stretched out.

"Tell me—I suppose your Dorine was good to look upon. Betty shot a shy little glance at the man before she asked, "What broke you and her up?"

"There isn't much to tell," Kerry hesitated. "She fell for some rich guy and

—she wanted me to stick by her just the same. She refused to give the old rich papa the go-by. So we split. That's all."

For an hour they sailed about enjoying the invigorating sport. Then in high spirits they put back to the cove.

At dinner Kerry found a note in his napkin. Unobserved he put it in his pocket, to read it later. Marie seemed more beautiful than ever tonight. Soft color suffused her olive cheeks and her raven hair glistened in the lamplight.

Betty seemed more talkative than usual.

In his room Kerry read the words penned by a girlish hand:

Darling Kerry: Meet me tonight in the study at twelve. BETTY.

These nightly treks to the study sent messages of glorious anticipation throbbing to his finger tips.

In the study Kerry thrilled as never before when the girl waiting for him kissed him, running her hands over his face, pushing little soft fingers through his heavy hair. The first rosy tint of dawn came only too soon. She had left him in the dark as the other girls had done.

He found Nan reading on the porch after breakfast, her hair streaming over her shapely tanned shoulders. As he came to her side her mysterious brown eyes looked up at him questioningly.

"Am I intruding?" asked Kerry.

"Why, no—please sit down."

"No, thanks—thought you might like to take a little walk before it gets too hot?" Kerry's eyes took in the delicate contours.

Later, when Nan and Kerry had returned from their walk on the beach, he tried to summarize the results of his morning spent with this naive girl. At first he had resented her evasiveness—her impersonal attitude when he yearned to be personal—her reproachful eyes when he tried to take her in his arms—which happened several times. But now when he was alone a strange elation crept over him. How wonderful she was! How very exquisite!

The big moment came when he found another note on his pillow, time and place like the others he had received, but signed Nan.

"What new miracle does this island hold for me?" Kerry asked himself. Suppose Lucille had fed him a cock-and-bull story about Marie giving him a line—suppose the girls had rebelled secretly against her. But then Marie had come to him—they had loved. Then in quick succession—the others—wordless nights of sweet love. Now elusive Nan, who had been in Kerry's thoughts entirely out of reach. He placed her note tenderly in his sailor's shirt—precious token of his conquest.

The intriguing odor of incense came to his nostrils as he entered the study. Kerry was intoxicated with the thought of the nearness of this divine bronze girl with dark mysterious eyes. Then he found her curled up on the bed. If the moon could only penetrate the moss-covered trellis at the windows. That indescribable thrill of a retreating woman, suffused Kerry with elation. Even now she fought her aroused love—until his long gentle kisses melted her remaining reserve. With tremulous lips she returned his burning caresses until she was cuddled in his arms. Moments of heavenly bliss drifted by—only too swiftly.

Suddenly across the island came the shrill whistle of a yacht as it dropped anchor—then the sharp staccato of barking dogs.

"Nan—the fishing party—they've returned."

"Yes—quick—go to your room, Kerry." She lighted the lamp deftly and started to arrange the bed.

"Marie—what does this mean you—you posed as Nan—you sent me the note?" stammered Kerry.

"Yes—I sent you—all the notes," admitted Marie.

"Then every night it was you—and not the other girls?"

"Yes—but I never meant that you should know—it was my husband who played sugar daddy to Dorine Baxter. And well—I wanted to get even—so I planned to collect my love debt from you. Now hurry Kerry dear—hubby will be coming any minute."

"Isn't nature wonderful?"
"That depends on how you see it."

Freddy sat through a few numbers of the floor show

Nifty Needlework

A big night and a big bankroll looked like easy pickings for this Broadway blackmailer

By MARK T. PATTIE

MADAM, if I don't find a check for one thousand dollars in the mail tomorrow morning the story will be published."

Frederick B. Barnes, owner and publisher of a scandal sheet, *Broadway Whispers*, smiled cynically and replaced the receiver on the hook. He rubbed his hands together with a satisfied chuckle. His cold gray eyes gleamed avariciously.

Printing intimate stories about wealthy people, or rather suppressing them for a handsome consideration, was the most lucrative business he had ever worked at in his forty-five years. He'd made a nice living since he started three months before. Al-

ready his bank account neared the five-thousand mark.

Madame Ousterholt, the lady at the other end of the wire, would come across without a murmur. He felt positive of that. She couldn't afford to have her escapades with a certain well-known society man become public. Her position among the Four Hundred was too exalted to risk exposure. Tomorrow morning Barnes would be a thousand dollars richer.

Freddy twirled his trimly barbered mustache and surveyed himself in his bedroom mirror. He was growing a bit stout, he admitted, a little balder each year, but he was still as good looking as at thirty. Tailor-made clothes helped a lot.

He had never succumbed to feminine snares, though he had played around with women more than the average. Playing them for suckers was remunerative. He never allowed sentiment to get the upper-hand.

On the strength of the contents of the morrow's mail Freddy decided he could afford a little relaxation. A man needed some occasionally to put pep into him. If he encountered a snappy little dame, so much the better. He couldn't turn his back on a good-looker.

Dialing a number, he called the head waiter at the Harrington night club, where he frequently dined. Pierre always greeted him by name. It gave Freddy a bit of a thrill to be so well known.

When he strolled into the club later in the evening, Pierre bowed him to his table with a face wreathed in smiles.

"M'sieur will have a good view of the floor show from here," he said ingratiatingly.

"Quite all right," agreed Freddy. Then as Pierre moved off, he beckoned with one finger. "If a pretty girl should happen in —alone, you understand—why, you—"

"M'sieur would like company, hein?" Pierre lifted his brows and rolled his eyes significantly. "Of a certainement, M'sieur Barnes. It shall be done."

He glided off. Freddy regarded the incoming crowd with bored eyes. The orchestra, suddenly blaring into life, blotted out the babel of voices. He watched the sprinkling of dancers that quickly became a whirlpool on the floor.

For more than an hour Freddy devoted himself to appeasing his hunger, fortified with a brace of cocktails. Concluding that, he sat listlessly through a few numbers of the floor show. The evening dragged somehow. Several times he glanced at his watch. Pierre's whisper, suddenly in his ear, startled him into life.

"A young lady," he announced softly. "What you call—a pippin."

Freddy looked up hastily. A pretty girl in a low-cut, revealing green gown, smiled down at him.

"Is this table reserved?' she asked. Her voice seemed to ripple. Freddy arose courteously.

"Why, no—not at all. I'd be delighted to have you share it with me."

Freddy bowed decorously, drew a chair out and held it for her. Her face seemed vaguely familiar. He had seen her somewhere.

The girl slid into her seat with a nonchalant, sinuous grace. Dexterously, she stripped the gloves from her hands, baring taper-

ing white fingers. She draped her luxurious, fur-bordered wrap over the back of the chair.

"This is a bit informal, I suppose." Her smile showed even white teeth, a dimple in the cleft of her chin. "I'm Myrna Defalls."

"Charmed, I'm sure," said Freddy. He felt unaccountable inferiority in her presence. "My name's Frederick B. Barnes." He extended his hand, which she shook with easy familiarity. It steadied Freddy; made him feel better.

He placed her now. Debutante of the year before. He'd seen her picture frequently in the rotogravure sections of the Sunday papers. Her people were filthy with money. His eyes narrowed with calculating shrewdness. The evening held forth promise.

After a glance about the room, Myrna fumbled in her wrap and produced a jewelled cigarette case from which she extracted a cigarette with dainty fingers. Eagerly, Freddy held a match while she lighted it. He never had wholly approved of women smoking, but somehow Myrna managed it delightfully. He liked to watch the smoke roll from her arched, rouged lips in a thin, blue cloud.

"I've been bored to death with affairs this season," Myrna explained simply. "Had the chauffeur drop me off here. Been wanting to do a night club all by myself. Told him I'd take a taxi home."

Suddenly, Freddy grew reckless. He'd never been so intimate with a blue-blood before.

"What would you like to drink?" he invited.

"A highball to start," she dimpled, her eyes lingering on his. "Only I'll have to go slow. This bootleg stuff goes right to my head."

Myrna's admission set Freddy's brain working swiftly. No better way to invest his money than to get Myrna thoroughly intoxicated. Then take her home, though he knew she lived a considerable distance out in the suburbs.

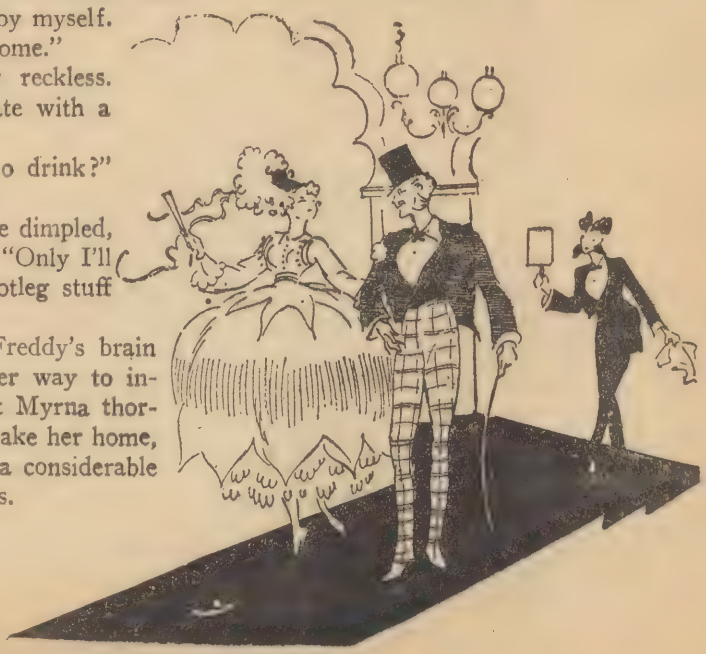
Before that, however, he'd find some way to get her up to his rooms. Once there, he could quickly get her more befuddled. Then compromise her. Afterwards, sober her up sufficiently for realization. She would pay plenty to keep the affair a secret.

He had brandy in his rooms. Some he had just obtained from his bootlegger. Powerful, heady stuff. Also a half pint of ether in the bathroom closet. Needle the brandy with that, get Myrna to drink a stiff mixture, and she'd be ready for anything. He knew a couple of friends he could call up on short notice for witnesses.

Almost too easy, he exulted, appraising Myrna's roving hazel eyes, her straight patrican nose, the sharp firmness of her scantily covered breasts.

After Myrna's fourth highball Freddy observed her change noticeably. Her head rolled giddily; her laugh rang out more frequently, shrill; her words blurred. Surreptitiously, following his first drink, Freddy ordered ginger ale for himself.

His pulses quickened at the promise extended by her obviously increasing maudilinity. It wouldn't take much doped brandy to put her in a helpless condition. In his rooms with her, he could take his time; enjoy himself thoroughly before calling up the witnesses. No need wasting money in this high-priced place.



With their increasing intimacy, Freddy had edged his chair against hers. Myrna leaned heavily on his shoulder. Her eyes, heavy lidded, drooped wearily. More and more her voice grew less distinct.

"Better take me home," she mumbled thickly. "Had 'bout 'nough to drink. Wha'ya say?"

"Certainly my dear." With alacrity Freddy jumped to his feet. He motioned the waiter for his check and drew Myrna's velvety wrap about her soft shoulders. As inconspicuously as possible, he steered her through the crowded room, retrieving his hat and coat on the way. Outside, he hailed a taxi.

"Oughta sober up a li'l 'fore I go home," Myrna muttered inside the cab. "Might get th' devil if folks saw me this way."

Freddy grasped his opportunity.

"How about going up to my apartment for a few minutes?" he suggested. "Got some stuff there that'll fix you up in a jiffy."

"Tha's th' ticket. Take me up your apar'ment. Don' care what you give me s'long's it straightens me out."

At Freddy's direction the driver wheeled them swiftly to his address. The distance was short. At his door, Freddy assisted Myrna to stagger out and half carried her up the flight of stairs to his second-floor apartment. In the living room Myrna collapsed in a big armchair while Freddy rid himself of his coat and hat.

Myrna had struggled to her feet when he turned.

"Help me off with these things," she called.

"Of course." Freddy set to eagerly, his blood beginning to course hotly.

He flung the wrap carelessly into a corner and put an arm around her swaying form, apparently to steady her, but actually to contact the softness of her corsetless body.

"Just sit down again for a minute," cautioned Freddy. "I'm going to fix you up a drink."

In his bedroom, he worked quickly, nervously. To Myrna's glass, half full of brandy, he added a generous quantity of ether. He diluted his own drink with plain water. He had to keep his own head clear.

"Here you are, my dear." Freddy emerged from the bedroom, holding out Myrna's glass. "Just a little brandy with water. It'll sober you up in no time."

Myrna waved him away.

"Dress's too tight," she burbled. "Chokin' me. Gotta take it off. Got somethin' I can put on?"

"Sure thing!" Freddy's eyes lighted. "I'll get you my dressing gown."

Trembling with anticipation, Freddy set the glasses on a small table and hastened back into the bedroom. Everything was working out better than he had dreamed. He could hardly get his dressing gown quickly enough. With that needled brandy inside Myrna . . . . .

She was drawing the green dress over her head when Freddy came into the living room again. He gasped at the exquisite picture. His whole body tingled queerly.

Only a sheer, brief stepin, beneath which Freddy saw a wispy brassiere that utterly failed of its purpose; a pinkish expanse; then a narrow girdle. He caught a glimpse of rounded thighs and symmetrical legs encased in wide-meshed black silk stockings. His breath shortened.

"Oughta turn your head." Myrna waggled a chiding finger. "Might lose an eye." She stretched out a white arm. "Let's have that robe."

Freddy's throat seemed constricted. Speech evaded him. Reluctantly, he handed Myrna the dressing gown. It cost him an effort to keep from savagely picking her up in his arms. But too strenuous action might spoil everything, he warned himself, before she downed the brandy. His eyes lingered on her tempting figure until the soft flannel robe fell around it.

"Now, I'll take that drink." Myrna relaxed with languourous grace into the armchair.

"Right!" Freddy leaped to obey. He handed Myrna a glass, careful to give her the one nearest. He recalled how he had set them down before he left the room. It wouldn't do to make a mistake.

Myrna raised her glass to her lips. Suddenly she pointed a finger at the opposite wall. "That your wife's picture?" she giggled.

Freddy followed the direction of her fin-

ger. "That?" He laughed scornfully. "Not a chance. I'm not married. Just a picture of a girl I used to be friendly with."

A choking sound escaped Myrna. Freddy swiveled his head around. Myrna's glass was almost empty. She coughed violently for a few seconds.

An exulting glow shot through Freddy. He didn't wonder that Myrna had choked. Drinking all that dope at one gulp would have floored even him. In a few minutes she would be ripe for the plucking.

He emptied his own glass hurriedly. The liquor trickling down burned his throat strangely. He forced back a desire to cough. Carelessly, he must have put more brandy in his own drink that he realized. Not enough, however, to bother him, he assured himself.

"Whoops!" Myrna yelled. She kicked a slim stockinged leg over the back of the armchair and grinned owlishly at Freddy. "Feel like doin' a dance!" she declared.

"Go ahead," Freddy encouraged. He felt that Myrna doing a dance would be well worth viewing. At that particular moment he couldn't think of any girl who had more beautiful legs.

Like a nymph, Myrna bounced from the armchair. With a reckless gesture, she flung the dressing gown across the room. She swayed for an instant, one eyebrow wickedly arched. She essayed a few wriggles of her supple body that sent the hot blood swirling to Freddy's head. Then, in long, sweeping circles, she pirouetted crazily about the room while Freddy's bloodshot, desiring eyes followed every graceful movement.

She halted suddenly before him. One siren-like white arm encircled his neck.

"Come on," she invited, her breath fanning his face, "le's dance!"

With something like a growl, Freddy's arm swept around Myrna. Realization of her nearness inflamed him like a heady wine. Her fragrance was in his nostrils, her hair in his eyes, her velvety cheek against his own. The pressure of his fingers on her soft flesh maddened him. She seemed like a feather in his arms.

Before Freddy realized what was happening, he found himself being whirled around the room at giddy speed. Apparently, Myrna was in no mood for ordinary dancing. Giggling, taunting with her red lips close, she spun him about until he stumbled, tripped over everything possible. Queerly, somehow, he felt powerless to resist.

All at once the room seemed to be weaving, rocking, quivering, like a house in the throes of an earthquake. Freddy fought himself clear of Myrna's clinging arms and tottered into the nearest chair. His head reeled sickeningly. It buzzed like a beehive. He couldn't account for it.

"Wassamatter, daddy—too much for you?" Myrna slipped into his lap. She ran slim fingers through his thinning hair, caressing his bald spot. "We were jus' gettin' hot."

Freddy sat quite still for a moment until

his head cleared a little. Evidently—devilishly so—he must have got the drinks mixed. He'd have to make another for Myrna. She wasn't drunk enough yet. This time, he'd make certain of his own glass. He looked up, managing a feeble smile.

"I'm all right now. How 'bout another drink?"

"Tell you what I'll do," Myrna said softly. She rested a smooth cheek against his. "I got a hobby. Mos' ev'body has. Mine's autographs. You put your name in my li'l book an' I'll drink anything you trot out. Wha'ya say?"

Simple enough, Freddy reflected a bit hazily.

"Sure!" he agreed heartily. "Le's have your ol' album, then I'll fix up another drink for both of us."

Myrna slid quickly from his lap. An instant later she bounded back again. Almost magically, it seemed to Freddy, he found a fountain pen in his fingers and Myrna holding a small notebook open for him. The page blurred slightly, but he steadied his hand sufficiently to dash off his name with a flourish where she indicated.

"Now," said Myrna, "go mix up a big, stiff drink. A great big one. Feel like I could drink furniture polish."

Freddy climbed awkwardly to his feet and navigated an erratic course to the bedroom. It took him some time to find another bottle of brandy, considerable longer to negotiate the ether bottle and mix the liquids without spilling too much of both. He finally succeeded. Myrna would go down cheering after drinking this second glassful, he chuckled to himself.

A glass in either hand, he blinked stupidly from the bedroom doorway. Myrna was nowhere in sight. He grinned a little foolishly. He surmised she probably was hiding behind the armchair, or in the clothes closet. Setting the glasses down, he began the search.

The room proved as empty as Mother Hubbard's proverbial cupboard. Freddy became convinced of it after ransacking the apartment thoroughly, even peering under the bed before he gave up in disgust. Myrna had gone—no question about it.

Dazedly, he eased himself into the armchair to ponder over the new puzzle. Funny, he mused, how quickly she had disappeared. Couldn't figure it out. First experience like it he'd ever had. Tomorrow morning, he'd —his head nodded . . . . .

The telephone jangling awoke Freddy with a start. The morning sun streaked through the window across the room. He glazed about blankly for a few seconds before he could corral his thoughts. He looked down at himself, still dressed. Recollection of what had happened filtered slowly through his head. The girl—Myrna —her sudden disappearance. He recalled it all.

Freddy creaked to his feet with a groan. The telephone still shrilled, compellingly. His head throbbed as though a million devils hammered on it. He'd have to see who was calling.

The sun, spattering across the scattered rugs on the floor, brought out vividly a discoloration of the hardwood beside the armchair. The whiteness of it compelled Freddy's attention. Myrna must have spilled some of her brandy on it. Have to get it fixed. Hadn't noticed it the night before.

He jerked the receiver off the hook with irritation. "Hello!" he rasped into the mouthpiece.

"Mr. Barnes?"

"Yeah."

"Eighth National Bank calling. You've overdrawn your account nearly a thousand dollars."

"Wh-a-a-t!" Freddy bellowed, almost dropping the receiver. He forgot his aching head.

"Yes. Mrs. Ousterholt's daughter, Myrna Defalls, cashed your check for five thousand this morning. We didn't want to embarrass her, so we let her—"

But Freddy didn't wait to hear the rest. He slammed the receiver back on its hook and tottered toward the armchair. He knew one false move and he might go up the river.

"Damn blackmailer!" he snarled, but he didn't say whether he meant himself or Myrna.

Kisses for Katrina

The girl had curves right where they should be

Monte made a noble effort to save them all for her — yes, indeed!

By W. CLYDE YOUNG

BESIDE an unshaded window in an apartment across the courtyard, a young lady was disrobing. From a point of feminine loveliness, there was absolutely no reason why she shouldn't have been standing beside an open window, but from a point of modesty, there were quite a few reasons.

From his apartment window, Monte Evans watched her with all the admiring fascination men have for such sights. The girl had curves right where they should be, and delightful contours in the proper places. The scantiness of her attire revealed all of them.

Monte permitted himself to ejaculate an emphatic "ah!" as he edged his chair closer to the window for a better view. The girl had disrobed down to her lacy underthings, and was busy removing her shoes and stockings, oblivious of the generous eyeful she was giving Monte. When her shoes dropped to the floor with a faint thud, she began peeling the stockings from her tapering white legs.

In another few minutes the undies would have to follow the way of the stockings, for Monte could see that she was standing beside a bathtub. A smile of pleasant anticipation lighted Monte's face as he drew as close to his window as possible without attracting her attention and causing her to lower the shade.

But his smile was followed almost immediately by a frown, and he drew back from his window. It was not a frown for the generous charms of the young lady across the courtyard, but a frown of disapproval for his own actions.

Monte had suddenly remembered that he wasn't being true to Katrina.

Katrina didn't indicate a vivacious young lady, but Katrina van Kuller belied her name. When it came to feminine charms, Katrina had everything that any girl can boast of, and a darned sight more than a lot of others possess. And she was all Monte's. At least, she had assured him that she was before she left for a vacation with her parents in the mountains. In exchange for that assurance, she had extracted from Monte a promise that he would be true to her in thought as well as action.

While holding the lovely Katrina in his arms, after his lips had generously sampled hers, making that promise hadn't been a particularly hard job for Monte. And, furthermore, he was determined to keep the promise. There were no doubts about the staunchness of his affection for her.

And as Monte realized that he wasn't being true to Katrina in his thoughts by watching the disrobing young lady across the apartment-house courtyard, he reached up and yanked down his window shade to shut off the temptation. He would be true to Katrina, he assured himself, no matter how difficult the task might be.

Hoping that he might strengthen his resolve of good behavior by studying again the autographed picture of herself Katrina had given him before she left for the mountain sojourn, Monte fished it out of his bureau drawer. Seating himself in a com-

Katrina had everything that any lovely girl could boast of

fortable chair, he sat for a long time admiring the full lines of the smiling face; the sparkling blue eyes, and the curly blonde hair.

"You are worth any price and any sacrifice, honey," he informed the picture as he pressed it to his lips and allowed his imagination to do the rest. "And when you get home tomorrow you'll find me the same as when you left."

As he studied the picture, he decided that the best place for it would be on the wall, where her smiling face would always serve as an incentive for his better conduct.

A search through his apartment, however, failed to bring forth a nail he could use to hang the picture on. Remembering that the man in the adjoining apartment was always driving nails into the walls, and feeling certain that he would have one to spare, Monte walked out into the hall, and knocked lightly upon his neighbor's door.

"Come in!" called a musical, feminine voice.

Opening the door, Monte entered and found himself in a living room. Standing before a library table and shaking a cocktail mixer like an expert was a breath-taking blonde beauty. Monte recognized her as Cynthia Wolthers, his neighbor's wife. She was dressed in a negligee that was more revealing than concealing, and was careless about the manner in which even it was wrapped about her attractive figure.

"Oh, hello!" she said in a voice that was sweet and caressing. "You're Monte, the young man who lives next door, aren't you?"

Monte admitted that he was. "I came to ——" He started to voice the purpose of his visit, for the blonde seemed much too attractive for his own good. But she interrupted quickly before he could finish speaking.

"To join me in a cocktail?" she asked with an alluring smile. Then, before Monte could deny that such was the case, she added her approval: "Swell! My husband has gone to his darned old club for the evening —and I hate to drink alone. Hope you like the way I mix cocktails."

As she spoke she filled two frosted glasses, from which emanated the strong essence of Bacardi. It was Monte's favorite drink, so instead of leaving hastily, as he had intended to do, he accepted the tumbler she proffered.

After the first taste of it, he decided that Cynthia Wolthers did know how to mix a potent drink, and he smiled his approval as he seated himself on a sofa.

But Cynthia chose to misinterpret his smile and his actions, and seated herself on the sofa beside him—quite close beside him. It was evident that she had consumed Bacardi cocktails before Monte arrived.

"Would you run off and desert your lonely wife for a mean old chess game at a dirty old club?" she asked as she eased her soft, pulsating body closer to him.

Monte tried to think of some commonplace reply, but it was impossible to think of commonplace things while near such a devastating creature as Cynthia. She had been created exclusively for the purpose of loving and being loved, and seemed quite starved for affection at that moment.

Such an invitation as she offered was one that could not be refused by an ordinary male, and Monte was no superman. Before he realized it, his arm was about her thinly clad waist and drawing her warm, yielding body to him.

"I do not see how any man could go away and leave you for even a moment," he told her earnestly.

"If you only meant it!" sighed Cynthia.

"But I do!" affirmed Monte promptly. "Here, let me prove it."

As proof, his other arm went about her waist, and held her to him even more tightly. She yielded eagerly to the embrace, and held

up her tempting, luscious red lips for further proof.

Monte knew that a kiss from them would prove as intoxicating as the Bacardi. Anxious to be drunk on their flavor, he bent his head quickly.

But his lips never touched hers.

As he lowered his lips toward her ruby ones, a vision of Katrina, for whom he should be saving his kisses, flashed before him. As though Cynthia had suddenly been revealed as a leper, he released her, and wasn't greatly concerned over the fact that she landed on the floor in an ungraceful heap.

Anxious to put the temptation of her behind him, he sprinted quickly to the door, and didn't breathe a sigh of relief until he was out in the hall and had closed the door.

It was a narrow escape, but he consoled himself on the grounds that he hadn't kissed her. He would still be able to face Katrina with a clean bill of conduct, and say that he had saved his kisses for her.

Fearing that Cynthia might follow him out into the hall, and that a further close contact with her might cause him to succumb to her charms, he headed quickly back toward his apartment.

As he reached it, he heard a steady sound in the adjoining apartment that sounded like someone hammering. Instantly he remembered the reason for leaving his own apartment, and went to his neighbor's door. With Katrina's picture on the wall for him to admire all the time, he would be safe from the temptations of other girls.

His light tap upon the door was answered by a vivacious brunette, and too late Monte remembered that his neighbor was an attractive chorine, whose rehearsals at home could easily be mistaken for someone hammering.

Monte looked at her in amazement, then swallowed his Adam's apple twice. The girl was clad in nothing but dancing slippers and her intimate underthings!

"Oh, Mr. Evans, you are just in time!" she exclaimed, smiling happily at sight of Monte. "Do come in!" And just to make sure Monte wouldn't refuse, she grabbed his wrist and dragged him into the apartment, closing the door after him.

"I've just been given a dancing part in Steinmetz's new musical show, 'Joy in June'," she told Monte as she led him to a sofa. "And I've been wanting someone to criticize my dance routine. It's a new little number that I arranged myself, and I want Steinmetz to use it in the show. You'll be my audience and critic, won't you?"

"With pleasure," Monte assured her.

She radiated sex appeal from every curve

And it wasn't hard for him to mean exactly what he said. Mitzi Mawson was one of those who had caused the term "It Girl" to be invented. She radiated sex appeal from every curving line of her short, full, dimply young body. Monte knew that a dance by her in her underthings would be something well worth watching.

And it was. Mitzi glided out into the middle of the room, after starting a small phonograph that contained the exact record she wished, and began a gyration that was the embodiment of all grace. But it was more than just the ordinary terpsichorean grace of a musical comedy ballerina. It was a fantasy of emotional hunger, executed with many extra frills for the exclusive entertainment of Monte.

The girl danced toward him with arms extended, appealingly. Then she retreated slowly, with an enticing smile to draw Monte

after her. Every curve of her delightful young body was offered for his admiration without restraint.

It was the sort of thing that drives a man's blood to his temples, then leaves it there in fever heat to pound uncontrollably. And Monte, being just an ordinary male, was no exception.

When the girl danced alluringly toward him and appeared ready to throw herself into his arms, Monte leaped to his feet and drew her to him hungrily. Pleased at the compliment he was paying to the success of her dance, Mitzi surrendered without protest.

Still holding her in his arms, Monte dropped back upon the sofa. With Mitzi resting contentedly on his lap, Monte drew her lips slowly toward his, anxious to discover whether her kiss could be as exquisite as her dance.

But again Monte failed to complete the act, for once again a vision of Katrina rose up before him.

Quickly he shoved the girl off his lap and leaped hastily to his feet.

"Sorry," he said as he sped toward the door. "I—I forgot something."

He promised her he would be true to her

While Mitzi stared after him in perplexity, wondering if she had been entertaining a lunatic, Monte dashed out of the room and back to the safety of his own apartment.

Unwilling to trust himself further outside his own apartment, he entered and dropped down into a chair. Never, he told himself, had he thought it possible that a man could be tempted so often in just one evening. And never had he seen so many desirable women. But none of them, he further assured himself, was the equal of Katrina. His great consolation was that by tomorrow she would be back for him to hold again in his arms.

With that thought to comfort him, Monte sat back contentedly in the chair.

But he was not left long in solitude.

He had not been back in his apartment for more than ten minutes when there came a light tap upon the door. It sounded surprisingly like the sort of gentle rap Katrina would give. With that thought giving him added strength, Monte leaped from the chair and swung open the door.

She had been created exclusively for the purpose of loving

But instead of Katrina, it was Berta, the bronze-haired operator of the telephone switchboard and general information clerk of the apartment lobby, who walked in.

"Good evening," she said, smiling. "A telegram just came for you, and I thought I would bring it up personally. You can't trust those bell hops anymore. The elevator isn't working properly, and that sure was a long, hot climb up four flights of stairs. Something a bit refreshing wouldn't go half bad right now."

She smiled inquiringly at Monte as she spoke and glanced significantly at a decanter of Scotch and a syphon of soda on an end-table. Monte knew then that she had visions of spending an hour or so in his apartment, as it was rumored she had done with other bachelors who attracted her roving fancy. Those bachelors, Monte also knew from rumors, should congratulate them-

selves, for Berta's reputation was that of a hot number.

But Monte was not looking for hot mamas just then, and believed that he had enough experience with them for one evening. Before the surprised Berta realized what was taking place, he grabbed her by the shoulders, whirled her quickly about, and delivered a resounding slap on the seat of her dress that caused her to leave the room in one flying leap.

Leaving her standing in the corridor with a surprised look upon her face, and with her hands tenderly holding that portion of her anatomy he had slapped, Monte closed the door with a slam. He was rid of her before she had a chance to do any tempting.

Quickly he reached for the telegram, for he felt certain that it was from Katrina.

It was. But the message was not what Monte had expected. With a stunned look upon his face, Monte read:

You have not telephoned or written me since I have been here stop positive proof that you do not love me and must be spending your time with other women stop so I am marrying the charming hotel manager here stop

KATRINA.

"What color bathing suit did Alma have on?"
"I couldn't see—she was reading a book."

Gene Monroe did not recognize her as the girl who would not unmask

Moonlight Madness

The tangled web of a seaside romance and an apartment house affair balance each other

By J. Lawrence Reeves

YVONNE buried herself deeper in the white sand, beneath the mammoth spread of a gaudy beach umbrella. From this oasis, she had a perfect view of the lifeguard who sat atop a nearby watch tower.

Yvonne smiled, and a pleasurable sensation coursed through her young veins. Her languorous eyes grew more dreamy as she lived again that night at a masked ball when this man had crushed her lips in one delirious kiss. Afterward he had unmasked, but she had refused to do so, and had fled from the party with uncertain emotions.

Evidently he had not learned her identity, for when Jim introduced her to Gene Monroe a few days later he displayed no sign of recognition. A few months after this she married Jim, and her memory of the incident, for the time being, became lost in the thrilling honeymoon.

A year passed, and Yvonne had not seen Gene Monroe. But she could not quite forget. Jim was less interested now, and life in general was becoming rather boresome. Then came Jim's suggestion that his wife spend a month at the seashore, away from the sweltering

city. Yvonne readily agreed and motored out to Glen Haven.

On her very first day at the beach she discovered Gene in the role of a lifeguard. Tall and dark as ever, with the same questioning expression in his eyes that she had noticed on the eventful night when Gene had held her close and drained her very soul of something that she now realized she must recapture.

As Yvonne's scantily clad body lay half submerged in the sand, she realized this. She had already become aware that she no longer wanted to avoid Gene Monroe. Yvonne wanted to talk to him and learn if possible what had held her enslaved on that memorable night—enslaved to a masked lover.

A wild eagerness took possession of her and a plan evolved itself within her fluffy head. Beyond a doubt, Gene's eyes were turned frequently in her direction. This sent her imagination soaring crazily.

Next day Yvonne wandered far up the north beach where rocky caverns jutted back into the cliffs. Gene would need to use field glasses if he wanted to find her today. She wondered whether he would be interested enough to watch her. She smiled to herself.

Virtually isolated from the outside world, she dove into the dancing surf minus her bathing suit. Yvonne gave herself up to the glorious sensation of contact with the cool waters. Then in the shade of her beach umbrella she stretched her slim form upon the sand and yielded herself to dreams.

The long afternoon drifted lazily by, to the musical swish of the surf. Darkness fell and Yvonne still dreamed, devouring morsels of remembered joy, in her anticipation of tonight. There was no question in her mind now. Gene would be coming to her tonight. He would hold her lips again in tender caress.

A moon hung suspended—a huge ball of silver that sprayed the sand with mellow light. Far down the beach a form moved along the tide-line.

"Gene," Yvonne murmured aloud—"Gene!"

A great wave of uncertainty assailed her as on the night when he first kissed her. But immediately a delicious tingling surged over her body. When the approaching figure became distinct in the moonlight, Yvonne darted from the shelter of the umbrella and splashed into the water.

"Hello, mermaid—what's the idea?" asked the man on the beach sarcastically. A laugh from the water followed the query.

"Bathing—don't tell me you don't know what I'm doing? Any law prohibiting going in at night?"

"Yes, there is—going in with nothing but your birthday clothes on," returned the voice on the water-edge.

Yvonne suddenly made a discovery—this was not Gene.

"Who are you—and what do you want?" came a little voice from the water.

"First, get out of that water. The chief wants to talk to you." The man spoke with an authority that Yvonne recognized.

"But—I can't—not while you stand there," quavered a weak protesting voice.

"All right, I'll step up the beach. But don't try to start anything with Pat Brien, or it'll be just too bad for you—see, baby?" Pat cleared his throat and strode up the beach.

With a dash, exceeding the rush she had so recently made into the water, she returned to her clothes. She slipped into them without drying herself.

"Well, are you dressed?" shouted the voice up the beach.

"Yes," snapped Yvonne.

A moment later a tall man stood before her, and she caught a reflection of something shiny from the edge of his coat. Yvonne knew well enough what it was. Her captor spoke sharply.

"Come on! Make it snappy—can't keep the chief waiting all night." He paused, then added, "He may fall for you—and let you go free. Who knows?" Pat chuckled softly.

"Oh, have a heart, officer—you can't arrest me for bathing at night without anything on, can they?" Yvonne realized her predicament fully.

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"How about going in during the daytime—without the wherewith on—do you think they can arrest you for that?" The trouble with you janes is, you think you can get away with murder and no one will say a word." Pat Brien cleared his throat again before continuing, "Good thing that Gene was on the job and kept a weather eye pealed for you."

Gene—Gene reporting her to the authorities! Something within Yvonne seemed to snap, but she told herself she must keep cool and use a little strategy. Suppose Jim should find out about her arrest! This fool idea of intriguing a common lifeguard! Well, this Gene Monroe had sure turned out to be a big flop.

She glanced at the tall man beside her. She didn't like that mustache pointing upward. It seemed to denote too much determination to suit Yvonne. If she could only sidetrack him from his purpose—vamp him a little—anything to avoid publicity. Certainly this Pat Brien must have some weakness—every man has his weakness.

"I don't suppose you'd refuse a little drink, mister?" Yvonne inquired in a tone meant to be nonchalant.

"Say, baby—what're you trying to get away with? Do I look as green as that?" Pat gave his prisoner a sharp look. They were now approaching the park lights.

"Of course not! But I can't go to court with this outfit on—and—well, I have a quart of Gordon up in my apartment.

I thought you might like to sample it while I change to something more suitable. If you are afraid — why—suit yourself." Yvonne's voice sounded so pitiful to Pat, that he hesitated.

"Well, you don't look so hot in those beach pajamas — guess it would be better if you changed. You have a car here, haven't you?" He pointed toward the parking space where cars were massed.

"Yes, right here on the end," Yvonne directed, with an inward singing of hope.

Yvonne was too busy to give even a glance to the man beside her. She was mulling over a plan for escape from this petty charge. Yvonne Manning — under arrest for bathing in the nude!

Gene Monroe was the direct and only cause. Surely something should happen —she just couldn't go to court. She must find a way! But how—how was she to get away from this detective with the turned-up mustache? If only she—

Well, here they were at her apartment —and glory!—there was no one in sight. Yvonne felt that she could never live down the disgrace if Jim found out. In the elevator, they were whisked to the tenth floor. Pat was just behind her, hanging to her trail like a bloodhound.

Pat made himself at home by flopping down in a chair and taking a magazine from the table. He started turning the pages but stopped to give Yvonne a sharp look.

"Get in action and dress—and don't be slow about it, either," he warned.

"Will you have a little drink, mister?" asked the prisoner meekly, giving the detective a come-hither look. She lifted and lowered her eyes devastatingly. Her slim form poised gracefully before this guardian of the law. Yvonne could see Pat's face soften. Then he cleared his throat.

"Don't want to put you to any trouble, girlie—but a little nip might do my throat a heap of good." She felt Pat's eyes on her as she left the room.

In the dinette, Yvonne mixed a drink that she knew would save her from the court. As she prepared the knockout for this man who arrested people who were indiscreet on the beaches, she mused.

If it were not for those missing teeth of Pat's, and that ugly scar across his cheek, Yvonne felt that she could actually go for him in a big way. She had looked into his eyes and she liked them. They reminded her of—but then all that was past. A fierce hatred for Gene Monroe took complete possession of her. If only she had him here now, instead of this plainclothes man! She would make him regret those prying eyes of his for the rest of his days.

As Pat unsuspectingly downed the ginrickey, his satisfaction was evident. Back in her boudoir, Yvonne hastily packed her belongings. In the filmiest step-ins and brassiere, her curves were glorious as she passed the mirror. Her firm young breasts were perfection. But she must hurry before Pat passed out. She was dressed and had slipped unnoticed through the kitchen entrance, down to the car with the baggage. Then returning she took the arm of the officer, whose step was none too steady. They reached the parked car without attracting any special attention.

As Yvonne sped along the moonlit highway with Pat slumped down in the seat beside her, she felt she had done a good job. She certainly had escaped nicely from a delicate situation. Jim would have been furious.

Good old Jim! Even if they were fed up on each other at times, she could depend upon him always. A tender feeling pulsed through her girlish heart. After she had dumped this meddling fool out, she would drive back to the city and surprise Jim. Rapturous thrills ran through her—sweet elation and anticipation took control for the moment. Then she turned off the highway, onto a side road that led back into thick woods overlooking the sea.

With all her strength, she pulled the detective from the car onto the sandy ground. Then backed the car up until she came to a clearing, she turned around and reached the highway. She headed back for the city—and home.

The sun was high when Yvonne reached her apartment and parked in front. She breathed a sigh of relief. She was safely at home. Wouldn't Jim be surprised when he returned from the office tonight? Yvonne laughed aloud as she unlocked the door of the apartment and entered. She was thinking of Pat and how she had spilled him out back there in the woods. Then she heard someone in her bedroom. Could Jim be sick? Her heart sank. Then a voice called out:

"Jimmie! Is that you, darling?" The next moment a girl stood in the doorway. "Oh! I thought Jimmie had come back to—who are you?" queried the girl with more than a trace of apprehension in her face and tone.

"Why, I'm just Jimmie's wife." Yvonne's heart took a nose dive, but she couldn't let this little hussy know it. "Why didn't Jim let you have a pair of my pajamas?"

"He—he said—oh, I don't know—did he know you were coming today?" The girl spoke in a quavering voice.

"No—no, I don't believe he did," Yvonne glanced about the topsy-turvy apartment.

"What are you going to do with me?" questioned the now thoroughly frightened girl.

"Not a thing—all I ask is that you keep this to yourself—don't ever say a word about me finding you here. I shall pretend ignorance of the whole affair. Now get into your clothes and go as soon as you can. Jim might take it into his head to come back," as she turned away Yvonne cast an approving glance at the girl's well rounded form.

The afternoon edition had arrived. Yvonne sat down where she would be able to see Jim when he drove up and began to read. An exclamation of surprise escaped her as she read the caption:

LIFEGUARD TAKEN FOR A RIDE

The paper went on to say that Gene Monroe had been in disguise—that he

had been drugged by some "person unknown" and had been left in the woods in the Palisades District.

"Mr. Monroe, a lifeguard at the Glen Haven beach, refused this morning to make a statement," the report stated.

Yvonne jumped to her feet. Gene! Was Gene Monroe the man with the missing teeth and the scar across his cheek—with the upward pointing mustache like that of a French military officer?

It didn't seem possible that she could have been so completely deceived. She had drugged Gene and had thrown him into the bushes. Yvonne felt a rush of deep sympathy. He must have wanted her love! She could see it all—his disguise had been only an excuse to get better acquainted.

Suddenly Yvonne began to disarrange the rooms as they had been when she arrived that morning. Jim must not guess that she had been here.

Yvonne knew now that she must go back to Glen Haven and stay out her allotted time.

A silver moon threw a mellow light along the beach and formed fantastic patterns on the cavern walls. The tide lapped in musical intonation among the rocks? Inside one of the caverns a man and girl sat close together talking.

"Gene—can you ever forgive me?" the girl asked.

"I'd forgive you, Yvonne—for anything."

Gently the man took the girl in his arms and pressed his lips to hers in a long, clinging kiss. Her masked lover of that long gone night had come back to return what he had taken from her soul.

Yvonne's head reeled with superlative happiness. A delirious pleasure flashed through her, and she relaxed slowly in the man's arms.

In the west the moon paled and a restless tide played along the white-flecked beach.

One thing about going out riding with a young preacher, a mother always knows that her girl's in good hands.

Army Love

Episode No. 9

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

There is an ancient fable about a man who warmed a frozen snake on his bosom. The snake revived and bit him, and he died

By GENERAL "X"

COLONEL WELCH, Commandant of the Army School at Fort Wilson—with one eye on his pretty stenographer—was laboriously explaining a fundamental rule of Army ethics to one of his student officers.

Said he, "Strange as it may seem, you mustn't call this method of artillery fire 'Whistler's rule,' in spite of the fact that it actually was invented by Colonel Whistler. But it's quite all right to refer to 'the Whistler-Hearn plotting board,' although neither Whistler nor Hearn had anything to do with it; it was invented by one of Captain Hearn's sergeants."

"But I don't quite see—"

"It's very simple. Never give an Army officer the credit for anything that he really does; only for what somebody else does."

Just then the telephone rang. It was the frantic voice of Major Bill Pritchett, Assistant Commandant of the school.

"Welchy, old boy," said the voice, "This is Bill. I'm in a jam. I'm down at Battery Hanson. One of my morale sergeants just phoned me. He happened to be at the railroad station and saw my wife get off the train. Just think of it! My wife back! She was to have been gone for two weeks; and here she is back again, and there'll be hell to pay! But the transportation officer is a good friend of mine, and will hold her up as long as possible. Meanwhile, Welchy, will you please make a bee-line for my quarters, and get that blonde out of there P.D.Q."

"P.D.Q. is no name for it!" exclaimed the Colonel. "You mean SOS. Can do. Class dismissed."

And a moment later, clad in trench coat and campaign hat, he was seated in his side-car, speeding toward the quarters of his friend and assistant.

He found Lulu, the blonde, still in bed, yawning lazily.

"Well, well," she greeted him. "What's the big idea of a strange Army officer barging in on a lady's boudoir at this hour of the morning? But you're rather cute looking, at that. Perhaps little Lulu is about to acquire a new boy friend."

"Perhaps Little Lulu is not!" snapped the Colonel. "Cut it! The ship is sinking. Women and children first."

"What do you mean 'children?'" she asked icily.

"I mean you've got to get out of here quick! The wife of your present boy friend is on her way here from the railroad station. There's not a moment to lose!"

"Oh, my Gawd!" exclaimed Lulu, flinging off the covers and springing out of bed. 'Where do we go from here?"

She was certainly an appealing bit of femininity in her filmy pink negligee, and under ordinary circumstances the dapper Beau Brummel of a Colonel Welch would have taken a long hard look at her. But today was different. Business first, and pleasure afterwards.

So he stripped off his trench coat and wrapped it around her bare shoulders. Then jammed his campaign hat down over her tousled yellow curls.

"Slip your feet into something," he brusquely commanded, "and beat it out the back door. My side car is waiting there. Tell the driver to take you over to my quarters, and for heaven's sakes do keep to the back streets in getting there. I'll pack up your things and follow. Now beat it!"

She scuttled out of the room, and down the stairs, as Colonel Welch set to work with military efficiency collecting Lulu's belongings.

They were scattered all over the place. In one of the closets, he found a leather traveling bag, evidently Lulu's; but it wasn't nearly large enough to hold all the woman's things, so the Colonel had to hunt all over the second story for another bag to take the left-overs. He had just completed stuffing everything into the two bags, when he heard voices downstairs, one of the voices being in the strident high pitched tones of Mrs. Major Pritchett. There was only one stairway in the house. Welch was trapped! And without a hat!

Rushing into the Major's bedroom, he found a garrison cap and jammed it onto his head. Then boldly sauntered down the stairs with the two bags, and confronted Mrs. Pritchett.

"Oh! You?" she said icily, raising her eyebrows.

"You see, you've been having company," the Colonel jauntily announced.

"Company? What do you mean company?"

"I've been staying in your quarters while you've been away. Can't you see that I'm just moving out?"

"Humph!" was her only comment.

Then, directing the enlisted man of the Motor Transportation Corps, who stood behind her with her luggage, to follow, she swept snootily past Colonel Welch up the stairs. She had never approved of her husband's friendship for the gay bachelor Colonel, anyway.

"Just a moment," said he to the soldier. "As soon as you are through taking Mrs. Pritchett's things upstairs, you will bring my two bags over to my quarters."

"Yes, sir," replied the man.

Mrs. Pritchett looked back from the stair-landing.

"Your bags?" she asked coldly. "One of them looks like Bill's."

"Certainly," replied Colonel Welch suavely. "There wasn't room in mine, so I borrowed one of your husband's. I'll bring it back when I'm through with it; never fear."

"See that you do," she snapped, proceeding upward.

"Ugh!" said the Colonel, as he left the house. "No wonder that poor Bill takes up with floosies. Something ought to be done about it."

What occurred at Colonel Welch's quarters, between him and the blonde Lulu, is none of your business or mine, nor does it have anything to do with the present story. All that we need know is that Lulu took the late afternoon train back to New York, and that Welch heaved a sigh of relief when she had gone.

But his relief was short-lived, for that evening at the Officers' Club, his assistant sought him out, and drew him one side.

"You're a hell of a friend!" exploded Major Pritchett.

"What's the matter," soothed Welch. "Didn't I do a good job of getting your blonde sweetie out of the house in the nick of time, just before that spitfire wife of yours barged in?"

"Oh you did that part of it all right. But you slipped up completely in removing the traces of the crime. Martha found several brass hairpins and a lipstick in Lulu's room. The hairpins are the wrong color to be Martha's, and of course Martha doesn't use lipstick. So there's hell to pay and she has walked out on me and gone over to stay with the Berrys until she can arrange for a divorce."

Colonel Welch looked hard at his friend.

"What explanation did you make for the hairpins and the lipstick?" he pointedly asked.

"No explanation at all," wailed Major Pritchett. "She didn't give me time. Just fishwifed me for about fifteen minutes, and then flounced out of the quarters, and went to the Berrys."

"Thank God!" exclaimed the Colonel, relaxing.

"Why—why—I don't see—."

"You wouldn't! But it's a godsend, just the same. We'll tell Martha that you've been in Washington ever since she left. Important government business—very confidential—likely to secure you a promotion, if it turns out all right."

"But I haven't—"

"Of course you haven't, but you can pretend, can't you?" Haven't you any military strategy? I'll get out some travel orders for you, and back-date them. Then you can tell Martha that you lent me your quarters, while you were away, for me to entertain some friends in, never dreaming that my

friends were women. You had just gotten back from Washington last night. Found me there, but no company. Never suspected anything until your wife flashed the hairpins on you. Aren't on speaking terms with me, as a result. Why, it's a perfect alibi, old fellow!"

Major Pritchett brightened perceptibly.

His superior continued, "I'll go right over to the Berrys, and make a humble and abject apology to your wife. Then you do the injured innocence act. Why, man, you'll have her eating out of your hand in no time!"

It worked! But it didn't last. For, although Martha Pritchett returned to her husband, they drifted apart again immediately and steadily. And he, in constant fear lest she learn that the supposed trip to Washington was all a fake, began to get nervous and neglect his work.

Colonel Welch needed that man! America was trying to win a war against Germany, Welch was the brilliant Commandant of the Training School, and Pritchett was his able assistant. So the Colonel came to me with his problem, and I (as Commanding General of Fort Wilson) called in my secret service operative, little Mrs. Captain White.

"Isn't there something that we can do to make that awful woman stop fighting with her husband?" I asked.

"It's not her fault, General," Mrs. White replied acidly. "It's his."

"Well, what can we do with him, then?" I countered.

"Make him fall in love with his wife," suggested the lady.

"With that old crab?" exclaimed Colonel Welch, butting into the conversation.

My face showed that I agreed with him.

"I think that she has quite a lot of sex appeal, if you'd ask me," was the astounding reply of Mrs. Captain White. "Leave it to me."

So I did. I always did in those days.

My little operative called on Martha Pritchett, and found the poor woman to be quite humanly pathetic, and eagerly willing to accept an invitation to dinner at the Whites the evening of the next Post dance. Mrs. White asked Mrs. Pritchett to come early, to help with the decorations; but what she really meant was to be helped to get decorated.

After a few deft touches from the practiced hand of Mrs. White, a frock which had been a total loss for frumpishness became a dainty vision of beauty. But the severely puritanical Martha Pritchett drew the line at cosmetics. My little operative tells me that the hardest job she ever had on any case assigned to her by me, was to get the first dab of rouge onto that Pritchett woman's cheek. However the result of even that one touch was so improving, that the Major's wife yielded, and let little Mrs. White go the whole hog.

The blase and debonair Colonel Welch sat up and took notice, when he saw the dinner partner who had been assigned to him; he hardly recognized this beautiful and graceful young woman as the straight-laced and dowdy old hen that was the wife of his assistant.

However, when Martha Pritchett learned who was to take her out to dinner, she flared up, and seemed almost her old self for an instant. But, after all, she was too well-bred to make a scene; and, Colonel Welch proved so attentive to her that, before the meal was over, she had quite forgotten her spite against him.

In addition to her host and hostess (Captain and Mrs. White), and Colonel Welch, there were two young officers from the fleet to complete the party. After dinner they all went over to the school building to the dance. Mrs. Pritchett felt so happy and young and gay and excited, that she impulsively squeezed Captain White's hand on the way over, and from that moment he too fell a prey to her synthetic charm.

I danced with her several times myself, in the Paul Jones. But Colonel Welch did not have to resort to his usual tactics of starting at a distance of eight couples from the object of his devotions in the grand right-and-left, and have the band leader watch him and change the music when he reached his objective. For, as Mrs. Pritchett had been his dinner partner, it was perfectly consistent with military etiquette for him to dance with her as often as he wanted to. And he did! He even danced several times with fat old Mrs. Berry for good measure,

just because she happened to be a friend of Martha Pritchett.

Any woman who takes the fancy of Colonel Welch—reputed the best picker in the whole U. S. Army—is sure of a run of popularity. So Martha Pritchett speedily became the hit of the evening. And the conspirators arranged that someone should tip off Major Bill, her husband.

Bill Pritchett had long ago given up attending Post dances; but tonight, before the evening was half over, he came, impelled largely by incredulous curiosity. And, having come to scoff, he remained to pray. To pray for favors from the hands of the wife whom he had so long neglected.

Indignantly he cut in on her, which so thrilled her that she impulsively squeezed his hand, thus thrilling him in turn. Forgotten were Lulu and all his other blonde friends; Major Pritchett had fallen in love with his wife.

They are now one of the most devoted couples in the Army. The quality of his work improved to such an extent that he was able to take over the job of Commandant when Colonel Welch was sent over-seas.

But there is an aftermath to this story. In recognition of the splendid job which Colonel Welch had done in organizing and building up the Service School at Fort Wilson, the War Department awarded the Distinguished Service Medal — to Major Pritchett!

Which is why Colonel Welch resigned from the Army, burnt his West Point diploma and all his uniforms in a public bonfire in the front yard of his quarters, and is now selling Fuller brushes for a living.

All of which is as it should be, being in full accordance with the fundamental principle of military ethics quoted near the beginning of this story, namely: "Never give an Army officer credit for anything that he really does; only for what somebody else does!"

POPULAR DITTIES PICTURED

"Love made a gypsy out of me!"

Blondes Always Get 'Em

Girls, maybe this idea will work for you — if you think you are losing the boy friend

By A. BRUNETTE

She was no worse than many have to look at

GLORIA GAY, like all good wives in this time of economic stress, was examining Bob's wardrobe with an eye to possible missing buttons, frayed cuffs or the elusive moth. Of course she hadn't a thought about blonde hairs or powder streaks on his shoulder—no, sir! She didn't even sniff suspiciously for the odor of perfume.

So you can imagine the expression on her already weary face when a picture of a pretty blonde fell face upward from the innocent bunch of telephone bills, theatre ticket stubs and poker chips that Gloria dropped on the bedroom floor.

"So! This is the knd of man I've been trusting all these years," she cried bitterly, stamping with both feet on the picture and throwing Bob's extra pants back into the closet, to the mercy of dust, disaster and depression.

But curiosity—feminine and feline trait—got the best of her anger and she rescued the photograph from under the shabby heel of her old house slippers.

"Your 'itty bitty Kitty" was written in the lower left corner.

"You hussy," Gloria muttered as she studied the luscious painted lips and mascaraed eyelashes of the piquant face before her. "Never has such stuff touched my lips—Bob said he hated painted women. Yet he never carries my picture around in his pocket!"

Then, like every woman who has discovered her husband's real nature (and if laid end to end they would reach from here to Paulota), she turned to her mirror and really looked at herself. Her reflection was no worse than many husbands have to look at. Ten years of married life and the remnants of last night's cold cream, to which clung the gray dust of ten in the morning had done their worst.

Then, because she was an honest soul, she groaned:

"So this is what poor Bob has had to look at the last thing at night—no wonder I've lost him. How can I win him back?" She tucked the fateful picture under the dresser scarf for future reference, threw herself on her bed and wept into her pillow.

Somehow a woman can always think best when she is crying. That's why tears are a female's strongest weapon. Gloria began to realize that she could not repair the ravages of ten years of neglect in one day. Yet with a blonde in the offing, no wife dare waste time. Bob should certainly find a new Gloria when he returned that evening. Let the broom rest where she had dropped it and the dishes soak in the sink. This

Bob was going to find a new Gloria

was war! And when she got through there would be one less husband preferring blondes.

Of course, as every woman knows, the first thing would be shampoo and finger wave. Funny how feminine attempts to allure the poor sons of Samson always begin with the hair. And while she was downtown she would look at negligees. Yes, this was going to be a thorough revamping job.

When Bob's voice sounded in the front hall that evening, Gloria reclined *a la Cleopatra* on a divan—it was really only the old sofa covered with the piano scarf. Her usually fluffy hair was plastered in shining waves to her shapely head—I should have saved that last adjective for the next sentence. Her soft white form was revealed through the scanty drapery of a transparent red dressing gown. She lay with a smile on her face, her smooth white arms behind her head.

Bob sniffed the air for the familiar aroma of roast beef and bellowed like a hungry animal:

"I say, Gloria! I've brought Jim along. I've been telling him what a swell—Well, fer the lova——"

He advanced toward her, friend Jim at his shoulder. The smile wavered on Gloria's lips and she feared that all was lost.

"Haven't I told you not to put that stuff on your face?" With one swipe of his handkerchief, Jim ruined her beauty treatment.

"Come on, Jim. Looks like we'll have to go back downtown and eat."

As they departed Jim sent her a knowing backward look that said—

"I'll be seeing you later."

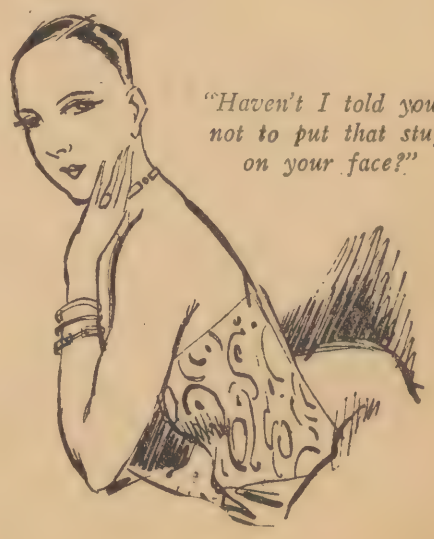
And then the door slammed shut, leaving her in tears. Was this the end of all she had planned? Must she give up the fight and let the blonde console him? No! She'd show him. After all, there was Jim's admiring glance. She knew what she'd do. She would make Bob jealous.

Like a general she laid her plans. It took her all the next day but she thought it time well spent if it would keep Bob at home. She cleaned the house, cooked a nice, big dinner and put on her prettiest, thinnest, most becoming dress. Then she telephoned Jim:

"I'm so sorry, Jim, about the dinner last night. I had a terrible headache. If I'd only known you were coming. Tonight, I'm fit as a fiddle. Come on over and try —a-some of my cooking . . . What's that? Why Jim! You know I said cooking——"

It didn't take much of her sales talk to close the deal.

"Fine," she concluded. "Try to get away



"Haven't I told you not to put that stuff on your face?"

"I'll try just once more"

early, so we can have time to sorta get acquainted before Bob gets home."

When Bob, stumbling over Jim's brown derby in the front hall, inhaled that roast turkey and apple pie aroma, he could have hugged his worst enemy. And there was good old Jim coming down from upstairs.

"Jim! By gosh, I'm glad to see you. Say, the gang's getting up a little game up at Charley's. Whata you say we hurry through dinner and drop in on 'em?"

It didn't take them long to get through the meal that Gloria had worked all day to prepare. Jim, stowing away the apple pie and cheese, made a mental comment that there would always be other men's wives, but this poker game . . . any way, poor Gloria was left in bitter anticipation of the dinner dishes as the front door slammed shut on her sobs.

But she didn't weep long.

"I'll try just once more," she decided. "Then if I can't win him back, I can at least console myself with the help of a lawyer and alimony. I ought to get at least—! Well, you ex-wives, what's a blonde's picture worth in cold cash?"

The next afternoon, Gloria walked determinedly into the swankiest beauty parlor she could find, plumped herself into the first booth and said:

"Give me everything and don't spare the cost. Yes, I said everything!"

The attendant slapped a steaming towel over her face and went to work. Such a terrible complexion. One of their famous facials would fix that. And she would have to show the poor soul how to wear an entirely different makeup. But that hair — heavens, that was beyond help, without months of steam oil treatments. (So run the minds of cosmeticians.)

At last, When Gloria was reconstructed except her hair, the little attendant said:

"What you need, Madam, is one of our lovely blonde transformations. I assure you it would make all the difference in the world in your appearance, Madam. Why, I even wear one mysef—and look at me."

While she talked she adjusted the shimmering waves of platinum blonde hair on Gloria's head and then stood back in a gesture of rapture.

"Your own mothaw wouldn't know you, dearie," she declared.

"How much is it?" asked Gloria, trying to see the price tag over her right ear. "Seventeen-fifty? Why, I can get the very same thing for two dollars, ninety-eight cents at . . ."

The attendant said frigidly:

"Please excuse me while I answer the telephone.

Gloria studied her reflection and pretended not to listen to the telephone conversation.

"Oh, hello, Bobby, darling. Yes, this is your itty bitty Kitty . . ."

"Kitty, huh?" thought Gloria.

"Yes, I'll be there—the left-hand entrance to the Woolworth Building, at eight o'clock. Bye-bye, dear."

By the time the girl got back to the business of transformations, Gloria, with her trigger-like brain, had evolved a plan.

"I'll take this," she said. "No, don't bother to wrap it—just remove the tag."

The attendant, having made a sale, could

"Your own mothaw wouldn't know you, dearie"

afford to be her sweet and natural self again.

"Gee, ya know that guy that just called me thinks I'm goin' to meet him at eight o'clock—an' it's seven now. Say, he will still be waitin' for me when the clock strikes nine."

"Oh, dear, is it seven already?" cried Gloria, wringing her hands. "I had a big date for eight o'clock and I can't get home and dressed that quickly. What'll I do?"

"Well, if anything I got will help you, dearie, you're certainly welcome. I'm just going over to my apartment now. Come along, dearie."

The two of them left together—Gloria smiling to herself. This was just what she wanted. What fun to select some of Kitty's clothes—probably paid for with Bob's money.

At eight o'clock, when Bob came strolling nonchalantly up to the Woolworth Building, he grinned toward the little blonde figure waiting in the shadows. "Kitty, and you're on time for once."

She turned her lovely shimmering head toward him and the white fur evening wrap fell away from her dazzling round shoulder.

"I'm not Kitty—but maybe I'd do."

"H'mm. Kitty hasn't a chance from now on," he said gallantly, as he hailed a taxi. "I told my wife I was going to a little poker game with the boys."

"Do you think she suspects you, big boy?" cooed Gloria.

"I should say not. She's safe at home."

"Oh, no, she's not," murmured Gloria against his shoulder as the taxi started.

"Ritz Hotel, driver," said Bob. "What was that you said, little girl?"

"Oh, I just said I'm married myself. And if my husband knew what I'm doing now he'd get the surprise of his life."

Bob grinned understandingly.

"Yes, and if my wife could see me now there wouldn't be enough left of me to bother picking up. She thinks I'm a perfect husband."

As Gloria snuggled close and his lips found hers she murmured softly: "When I get through with you tonight, big boy, you won't be fit to be any woman's husband."

STREET SCHEME

Nedra's Naughty Night

She had thought herself a coward, until she met Teddy under the silver glow of Florida's platinum-plated moon

By T. Eugene Grist

IT COULDN'T last long—this glorious Saturnalia—this carefree abandonment to pleasure. This wealth of happiness, and tasting life under the golden daylight of southern skies; the exotic warmth of moon-plated Florida star-spread nights. The beach with white sand; the soothing ocean water; the riotous crowd constantly going on one party or another; nor the stolen moments alone in secluded nooks with Ted, or Bart, or Barry.

It couldn't last! Nedra shook her head, and sighed wistfully, and stared from the little window that gave her a broad view of the ocean front from her hotel room. To-morrow, or the next day, or the next, her fairy godmother would wave the fatal wand, and she would trek back to old New York. To slavery, and an ordered routine of life. To drinking parties that were constant replicas of the ones preceding; to boy-friends who loved you just to paw over your flesh. If you gave in to them, maybe they came back, and maybe they didn't.

Disgust covered Nedra's pretty, full-lipped, velvety mouth, made the crimson lines stand out prominently, and left the impression of a perfect cupid's bow.

Slowly she turned from watching the bathers lolling in the warm sand. Inquir-

ingly she gazed at the supple lines of her healthy, firm young body, revealed except for a black crepe dance-set that hid nothing at all.

She smiled at her image in the mirror and pulled the dainty pink strap aside, displaying a swath of firm flesh, tanned to a nut-brown. That tanning, which she had secured from the ever-gracious Florida sun, was a source of deep pride to Nedra. She displayed it at every opportunity.

She thrilled intensely as she thought of what Teddy would say, or do, if he could see her now. She could not forget for an instant the night before, when he had kissed her fiercely, his hands touching nerves that sent sizzling messages to her brain. She had been breathless, yet a trifle languid and unresisting, and terribly afraid. Afraid of what?

She laughed harshly, derisively, and smoothed her plump thighs. They were well rounded and glowed with a faint redness through the tan when her hands ran over them.

She felt satisfied as she noted their even contour as they developed into legs that fairly melted into dainty ankles. She had nothing to be ashamed of. She was lovely.

She tossed the fluffy platinum strands from her forehead. A new light glowed in her eyes, and a peculiar warmth prickled the skin in her cheeks. She was still thinking of Teddy.

Tonight—ah, tonight—she reminded herself deliciously. And she could feel her bosom swelling as she thought of what was to come. She would not disappoint Teddy—she had given her promise. He would be eager, and demanding. She sighed ecstatically, and pulled one stocking over her smooth leg.

She stared at her face in the large mirror. Her eyes were accusing, ironical. Would she go through with it—had she the courage? She had forced herself to meet the ordeal a hundred times, in New York, and then at the final moment she had backed out. Other girls had told her of their experiences until she felt as though she knew as much as the most seasoned veteran. It was not because of uncertainty—it was cowardice!

Carefully she slipped the other stocking up over her knee and impatiently snapped a rosetted garter into place. She smoothed her leg carefully with her hands.

Standing up, she surveyed herself again. Platinum hair, delicious mouth, moist, waiting. The transparent folds of the dance-set—the body it hugged to perfection; then slender brown legs, with dainty calves. What a stock, what a bounteous gift she had!

Her thoughts wandered on. In her mind she pictured Teddy. His curly, chestnut-brown hair, laughing blue eyes, and mouth with lips that were undeniable in their insistence. He was tall, and built on the proportions of an athlete. The type she had always worshipped. And he had money!

She stepped into a fleecy sport skirt. She pirouetted about to see that every line and crease was just right. The smile that lighted her face showed that she was satisfied. If Teddy would only marry her, she would be freed of work. She need never return to New York. Glorious! Then a sense of nostalgia seized her as she thought of never seeing her friends again, the girls she worked with. But she could visit them—she would!

She smiled broadly at the queer way her mind was concocting visions for her. It was almost like a story out of a fairy-tale book. "Too good to be true," she told herself with a touch of sarcasm.

She slipped a waist of summery, pale yellow material over her head. It settled about her shoulders and breasts and clung tenaciously. She patted her bosom mischievously—it just wouldn't behave.

She remembered that she must hurry down, and eat. She would only have a short time to get ready. She must not be late to her appointment with Teddy. He had promised to take her to the Yacht Club, a swanky place a mile or two up the beach from the hotel. It was to be a private party, and she knew it would be hot. She hoped she could hold her own—hold Teddy from the wills of the gilded butterflies that were continually fluttering about him. And with a last-minute pat to her hair, she slipped quietly from the room and walked slowly down the wide stairway.

A pale moon sent its rays scattering over the white sand on the beach and along the white ribbon that was the cement road leading directly along the water front. Myriads of stars, twinkling merrily, dotted the purplish-black void spread romantically overhead.

Teddy had the top lowered on his swanky, long-nosed roadster and Nedra leaned back on the upholstery and drank in the moon-magic. She felt glorious, and uplifted, as though she could do anything tonight. Just being seated beside Teddy sent waves of anticipation through her sleek young body.

She glanced at him, not moving her head, as he watched the road, and her heart beat faster. His wavy hair was tossing riotously in the swift, cool breeze, and there was a certain persistence about the set of his firm chin. A sense of determination. She wondered idly whether his determination always would get for him what he wanted.

Her thoughts seemed to arouse him, for he glanced at her momentarily. A tender smile wreathed his sensitive mouth.

"Happy?" he asked enthusiastically, a compelling hand bringing her knees closer to his own.

"Am I—and how!" she breathed ecstatically.

They rode on in silence for a while, then she reached over and let her hand rest on his as he gripped the hard rubber of the steering wheel. He dropped his hand to her knee again, and hers remained on top. She could feel the warmth of his fingers through her dress, through the fragile chiffon of her stocking.

"Going to be a good girl, Nedra?" Ted asked softly. "It'll be a tough crowd—the kind that don't go half way. Think you can match their pace?"

She smiled and looked delphic. Her lips and her teeth and her eyes were an adorable combination as she turned them toward Ted's face. She wanted to keep him guessing.

The Yacht Club's building was filled and overflowing to the wide, lantern-hung veranda that rested far out over the water. The music and the drinking and the dancing had started before Nedra and Ted arrived. The loving, well—it went on in a continuous cycle.

Several girls rushed to Teddy as he led Nedra across the veranda toward the spacious ballroom. He was ever popular, a much desired quantity, it seemed. Nedra did not like the intrusions and she made up her mind to hold him at any cost.

Ted claimed the first three dances. He swung her lightly out onto the smooth floor, and she looked with parted lips toward the ceiling. Her heart was beating fast. She could feel it pounding insistently against her ribs, and she wondered if its vibrations were imparted to Teddy. She liked the way his lithe torso seemed fitted to her own, and the way he pressed her to him in the rhythm of the dance.

"You're a beautiful temptation tonight, Nedra," he told her enthusiastically.

"You like me, Teddy?" she asked, thrilled. Unconsciously she hummed several lines of the musical number the orchestra was playing.

"Do I like you?" He gave her waist an intimate squeeze, and leaned close, until his lips were nearly touching her own. His eyes were avid pools as they held her own in an eloquent gaze. "We'll sit out the next

one, and I'll demonstrate how much!"

"Okay!" she answered blithely.

The moon painted a platinum path right up to the edge of the pier that joined the veranda of the clubhouse. It shimmered and danced in the easy roll of the water.

"My yacht's down here," Ted told Nedra, as he helped her down the steps that led from the veranda to the wharf.

She caught her breath as she beheld the trim outlines of the boat. How nice it would be to go sailing around the world in it—just Teddy and her—and their love.

The yacht was a sumptuous affair, outfitted with the latest and best in yachting equipment.

"This is my office and stateroom," he told her as she followed him down a flight of steel steps into a rectangular compartment.

She hesitated a moment at the bottom of the last step. Something seemed to be drawing her back—a red flash of warning in her mind. Would it be proper to go in there with Ted, she asked herself uncertainly. Would it?

He looked at her curiously, and she smiled.

"Coming in?" he asked, his brows describing faint arches.

"Sure!" she replied quickly. And as her heart fluttered unnaturally, she remembered her resolution.

He pulled a wicker chair up to a small drinking table for her. Then he busied himself very expertly with a cocktail shaker. She noted with interest that he had all the necessary material and equipment for a "jolly good time." She tried to divert herself from the pictures her mind was conjuring by speculating on how many victims had fallen prey to this adorable spider and his golden web. She wondered if she were going to be the *nth* number. Silly!

He poured her a large dose of amber liquid, and then one for himself.

"Here's luck, and a brave heart!" he exclaimed, and emptied his glass at a swallow.

Nedra sipped slowly. She knew how potent this stuff could be—how little of it it took to put her awry.

"What's the matter?" Ted asked grumpily. "Gonna back down? I thought the way you started out tonight we were going to get somewhere, and here you are crabbing already!"

She didn't know what to say. She was tempted to excuse herself on some pretext. To break away, and leave him. She couldn't go through with it—play the way he wanted her to. Her whole soul revolted at the idea.

And yet, she wanted him more than anything else in the world. And if she backed down now, it would mean giving Teddy up. Relinquishing him to those girls back there in the club. He could take his pick of any

of them, and they would all flock to his yacht with him. It would be "lights out" for her, and a hasty trip back to New York. Her Florida romancing and her costly vacation would all go for naught.

Arising from her chair, she walked slowly to where he was standing. He looked at her moodily, a faint frown of disappointment webbing his forehead. Placing her hands on his trim shoulders and bending her body until it was touching his, she said:

"Can't you give me time—to get started, Teddy? Don't be a meany—snap out of it, and give me a helping hand!"

He looked surprised, and stared awkwardly. No doubt her sudden change in manner upset him, and she smiled inwardly to see the way his eyes cleared and the frown disappeared from his forehead.

"Well," he commended quickly, "that's the way to come out of it! And it demands another drink!"

"Might as well do it," Nedra thought, as she emptied her second glass.

And then it happened. Teddy came over to her, and with a rash movement attempted to grasp her about the waist. In doing so, he bumped the hand that was holding her liquor glass, which he had lately filled, and the bubbling liquid showered over the front of her dress in a miniature cataract.

"I'm terribly sorry," Teddy hastily apologized. He fumbled nervously with the hem of her dress, and his face turned a deep red. "I've ruined your dress, and put you in a bad situation!"

Nedra looked at him askance. She didn't know whether to cry, or shout with joy. She smiled wanly instead. "I've got to take this off, and dry it. I can't go back to the club with it wet."

Teddy continued to mumble his regrets, but he liked the idea, and he watched closely as she pulled the limp chiffon over her creamy shoulders. His eyes appeared ready to pop as she stood before him, revealed except for the shadowy layer of her brief panties and her briefer brassiere. She could hear him sucking in his breath, and a flush stole over her face.

"You mustn't look," she warned him. "And if you've got a robe handy, I could use it."

"You're crazy," he affirmed hoarsely, "for wanting to cover up a form like you've got! Why, I'd pay a hundred dollars a day just to have the pleasure of looking at it!"

He was close beside her now, and she could feel his eyes caressing every inch of her deeply tanned body. Suddenly she wanted him to take her in his arms and hold her tight. The fear that she had always harbored for men had vanished, and a peculiar urge had taken its place. A new feeling that tugged at her, and left her weak and unresisting with the force of it.

"Where have you been all my life?" Teddy asked joyfully, and he moved closer and closer. His hands roamed over her satiny skin with quick, nervous movements. She could feel him breathing, faster and faster. She wanted to be in his arms, to have him caress her, forever and ever!

And then he turned the lights out, and she sighed deliciously.

The next morning Nedra boarded a train for New York. She was going back—to her town; the firm where she worked; her friends! But she was through—she was merely going back to say good-bye. Teddy was going to meet her in the big city. From there they were going to Europe to complete their romance, beneath the blue Mediterranean skies.

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* * *

WISE

Flubb: "Sorry, old man, I couldn't keep the engagement. Circumstances over which I have no control prevented."

Dubb: "Oh, that's all right. By the way, how is your wife?"

* * *

COMFORTING

Senator Sorghum (addressing political gathering): "Friends, with all this racket I can hardly hear myself speak."

Voice from rear of room: "You ain't missin' much, mister."

* * *

THOSE KIND OF CIGARS

Bo: "How is that you always smoke quarter cigars?"

Ho: "Somebody else always smokes the other three-quarters."

EXPLAINING IT

A tourist in rural England stopped at a farmhouse for dinner one day. The main dish was ham. One of the children passed up his plate for a second helping.

"Pop," he said, "I want some more 'am."

"Don't say 'am," frowned the father. "Say 'am."

"I did say 'am," insisted the child.

The mother turned to the traveler with an apologetic smile. "They both think they're saying 'am."

* * *

"Do you always have police protection?"

"Yes, except when the cook has her night out."

* * *

SOME OF US ARE

Teacher: "Johnny, give me a sentence containing the word 'beans.'"

Johnny: "All of us are human beans."

* * *

GRAMMATICAL

Rastus (at table): "Pass the 'lasses, Susie."

Susie: "Don't say 'lasses. Say molasses."

Rastus (indignantly): "What for I want to say mo' 'lasses when I ain't had nany yet?"

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I. O. U.

Teacher: "The Egyptians kept their accounts on slabs of stone. What progress has been made since then?"

Jake: "Today people writes them on cakes of ice."

* * *

SHE FELL OVER

Housewife: "If you can't read that 'No Peddler' sign I'll buy a large one."

Agent: "I have just the kind you need."

* * *

NO HELP NEEDED

A sweet young miss was strolling along the avenue when a car slid up to the curb beside her.

"Can I give you a lift, sugar?" inquired a barely audible voice from behind the wheel.

"Save your strength, brother," was the unexpected answer. "If you hold on a minute I'll hop in myself!"

* * *

Maybelle: "My husband's the kindest, most considerate man in the world."

Flobelle: "How, dearie?"

Maybelle: "He's going to let me get a divorce on the grounds of extreme cruelty."

Florabelle: "I wish that Sally would hurry and get married."

Gwendolyn: "Why so?"

Florabelle: "She is so good and kind about lending her things."

* * *

PITTER-PATTER

"But for one thing I wouldn't be alive today."

"What's that?"

"The beating of my heart."

* * *

ANOTHER CUSTOMER

"I demand protection," exclaimed the gent as he rushed into the police station.

"Awright — awright," replied the chief. "Where's your joint?"

* * *

SURE ENOUGH

"Be happy Peggy," mother told her tiny daughter when she began crying, "God wants us all to be happy like He is."

"Well," Peggy sobbed, "God ought to be happy, He owns the whole world and all that is in it."

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"	II.	Nude Adult Male
"	III.	Nervous System of Female
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"	VI.	Muscular System (Anterior)
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"	X.	Male Genital Organs in Detail
"	XI.	Female Genital Organs in Detail
"	XII.	Cross-Section of Pregnant Female Body with Child

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